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Erika Mantz

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UNH Poster Campaign Underway To Reduce Violence Against Women

Contact: [Erika Mantz](#)
603-862-1567
UNH Media Relations

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DURHAM, N.H. -- A poster campaign that challenges community members to play a role in helping to end violence against women is underway throughout the University of New Hampshire campus as well as at several off-campus locations.

The goal of the series of four posters is to reduce violence against women. The project is supported by a grant to the UNH Police Department from the Office on Violence Against Women, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice and a grant from the UNH Parents' Association.

In 2002, UNH researchers received a U.S. Department of Justice grant to evaluate the effectiveness of a rape prevention program that approaches men and women as potential bystanders or witnesses as opposed to men as perpetrators and women as victims and found it to be successful. That research led to the development of the poster campaign.

In a pilot study examining the effectiveness of this media campaign, preliminary research results indicate that the posters, a form of passive intervention, can increase students' knowledge on the role of a bystander in cases of violence against women. More than 300 UNH students contributed feedback throughout the design and editing of the project. The researchers also conducted a web-based survey to measure students' exposure to and the efficacy of the poster campaign.

"This project is one of the most exciting and creative projects in which I have been involved, and it is the first of its kind: a media campaign specifically designed to focus on bystanders and teach them the importance in intervening in safe, practical ways, said Mary Moynihan, research associate of women's studies. "This bystander model does not approach men as potential perpetrators or women as potential victims. It is based on a community of responsibility model that holds that everyone in the community has a role to play in ending violence against women. The project has been a student-oriented and student-driven project from the outset. We are very optimistic that the messages on the posters will resonate with a wider student audience."

The posters spotlight issues such as intimate partner abuse, sexual harassment, and the responsibility of bystanders to support survivors of sexual assault. One of the poster scenes depicts an argument between intimate partners occurring in a dorm room. Outside the room, two students discuss potential strategies for intervening. Poster participant Angela Borges said "...the bystander approach is inclusive. Chances are at some point almost everyone will be affected by the problems of sexual assault and intimate partner violence. While it is vital to

think about prevention with perpetrators and support with survivors, in reality this is a problem that needs and deserves everyone's attention. Bystanders must be empowered to 'step in and speak up' safely and effectively."

Some safe ways of intervening include being with others and contacting someone in a position of responsibility, calling the police or 911, or contacting a local abuse or support center such as the Sexual Harassment and Rape Prevention Program (SHARPP) on campus.

UNH alumna Theresa Marquardt coordinated poster production with UNH photographer Lisa Nugent and the designers at Circus Media of Portsmouth. For more information about this campaign or for copies of the posters, contact Jane Stapleton, 603-862-5023; Sharyn Potter, 603-862-3630; Mary Moynihan, 603-862-5023; or Victoria Banyard 603-862-2869.

Editors: The posters are available to download at:

http://www.unh.edu/news/img/UNH_Bystander_Poster01.jpg

http://www.unh.edu/news/img/UNH_Bystander_Poster03.jpg